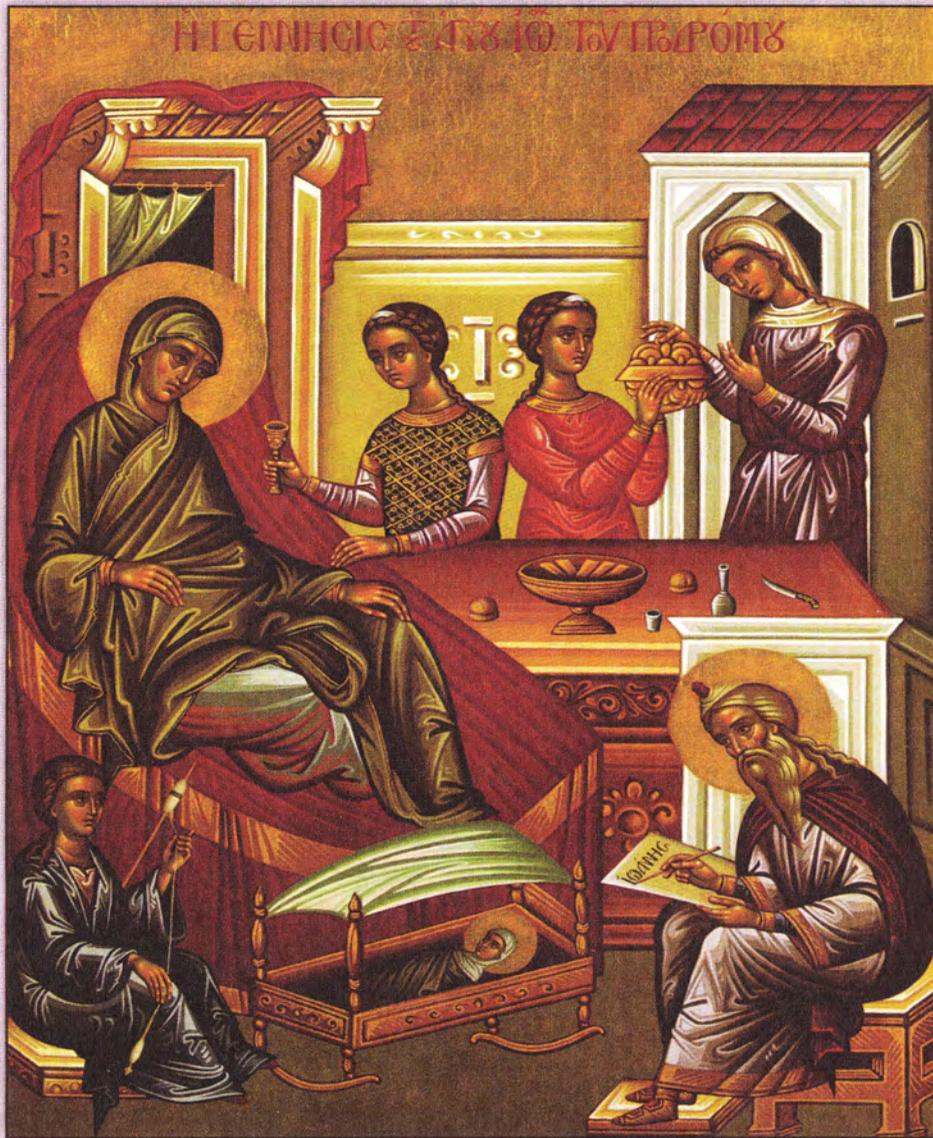


SECOND SUNDAY AFTER PENTECOST
SECOND SUNDAY OF MATTHEW



Icon of the Nativity of Saint John the Baptist -- June 24th

ON CONTROLLING OUR THOUGHTS

By Father Thaddeus of Vitovnica

Our life depends on the kind of thoughts we nurture. If our thoughts are peaceful, calm, meek, and kind, then that is what our life is like. If our attention is turned to the circumstances in which we live, we are drawn into a whirlpool of thoughts and can have neither peace nor tranquility.

As soon as a desire or a worldly thought enters our mind, God immediately sends a warning. Instead of coming to our senses and blocking such thoughts and desires, we nurture them and long for them, and afterwards we wonder why bad things happen to us. These signs of warning come in the form of temptations.

In our minds we conceive everything we do, say, and plan. Without this we cannot do or say anything. Everything first receives its shape and form in the mind; all of our energy is first made manifest in our thoughts. Thoughts are the power that conceives everything in the center of our being (the heart) and when we are united with the Source of life (God), everything is revealed to us and we are open to all kinds of knowledge.

This is how we must live – controlling our thoughts. It is not good to dwell on every thought that comes to us; otherwise we lose our peace. If we learn to refuse such proposals, we are quiet. We do not fantasize or create images in our mind.

thoughts
BECOME
words
WHICH
BECOME YOUR
actions WHICH BECOME YOUR habits
character WHICH BECOME YOUR
BECOMES YOUR destiny

PEACE OF HEART

Disappointments are meaningless with peace of heart

We often find ourselves disappointed in life. The job we really wanted is given to another person. An associate at work doesn't invite us to the dinner party, yet invited a coworker and his wife. A person we'd love to have as a friend shows no interest and we feel rejected. The music director at church doesn't allow us to join the choir. Someone much younger gets the promotion, along with an increase in salary. You get the idea.

If we have peace in our heart, all these disappointments are meaningless. The man who has peace in his heart gives thanks to God for all things. Even illnesses and

poverty can be embraced if we see all as allowed by God because He loves us and grants just what we need for our salvation.

When we approach all that comes our way with a gladsome heart, we gain that which is most profitable. The treasure that is ours is one that can not be take away. Not even death can deprive us of this treasure. If we give glory to God for all things, a peaceful heart will be ours.

With love in Christ,
Abbot Tryphon
All-Merciful Saviour
Orthodox Christian Monastery

WHY DO WE NEED TO GO TO CONFESSION?

By Metropolitan Kallistos Ware

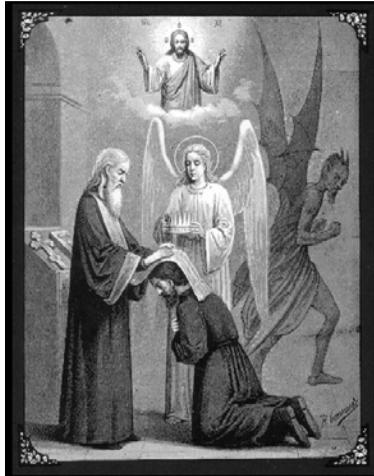
"Why do we need to go to confession? Is it not enough to confess our sins with sincerity in our private prayers each evening, will not God forgive us from the very moment that we confess our sins? Yes, as soon as we turn to God in true repentance He forgives us. God is always more ready to forgive than we to repent. Even the slightest turning of our heart will be blessed by God. Why then are we taught also to go to the sacrament of confession?

First: there are no private sins, all sins affect our brothers and sisters in Christ. All of our sins, however secret, have an effect on the community. If I feel in my heart anger towards someone else, even if I do not show it by word or action, that evil disposition in my heart has a destructive effect on others around. Every sin is a sin against the community; every sin however secret is a stumbling block for others and makes it harder for them to serve Christ. In the early Church confession was public. After the fourth century, with the growth of the Christian community, that gave scandal and so confession assumed its present form, as an opening of the heart before the priest alone, under conditions of secrecy. But let us remember that during confession the priest is there, among other things, as the representative of the community, of the people. The fact that we confess not just to God, but in the presence of a fellow man,

shows that we acknowledge the communal social dimension of all our sins. In confessing in his presence we are also asking forgiveness from the community.

Once before the Divine Liturgy St. John of San Francisco was hearing the confession of a man, and the man said: "Yes I know that what I have done is a sin, I ask God's forgiveness, but my heart is like a stone, I do not feel any sorrow for my sin, it is all just in my brain." So

St. John said to him: "Go out into the center of the church in front of the people and make a prostration before them and then come back to me." As the man did this and knelt to ask forgiveness from the people before him, something broke inside his heart and it came alive again. Suddenly he felt real compunction for what he had done. He said "now it is different," and the Archbishop gave him forgiveness. That



was the moment of turning for him because he acknowledged that his sin was a sin against the community and he asked their forgiveness. So in our confession let us first of all recall that dimension. We are also asking for forgiveness of our brothers and sisters for what we have done. That is one reason to go to confession, because sin is social.

Second: The spoken word, the uttered word has great force. This applies in two ways. First of all we listen to the spoken word of the priest, the council that he gives, and it may

be that what he says if written down and put in a book would not seem so striking. It may be that it wouldn't seem so remarkable. But in confession the priest is praying and we are praying for the light of the Holy Spirit, and he is addressing those words under the guidance of the Holy Spirit to each one of us, to each penitent personally. The words which looked at in the abstract might seem obvious, common place, can prove words of fire when we realize that they are being said to me personally here and now under the inspiration of the Holy Spirit.

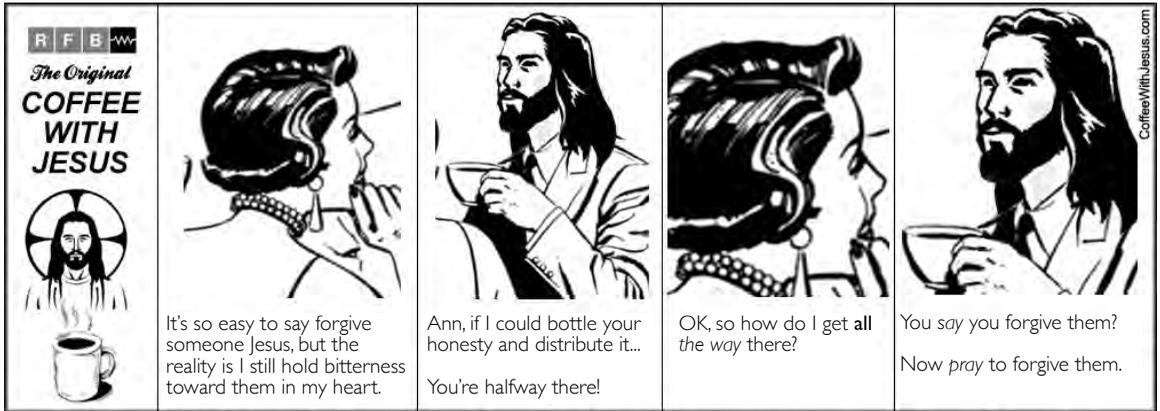
At a convent in London many years ago there was a priest, Fr. John, who didn't much like hearing confessions, he didn't much like giving sermons either. He was a person of few words and very humble, and didn't feel he really had the authority to offer council in confession, but he was blessed by the bishop to hear confessions so he did so. On one occasion a woman was telling him at immense length of her quarrels with her husband: "I said this and he said this and I told him he was wrong and told him this" and so it went on "and I told him this and this." When she had finally stopped all Fr. John did was to turn to her and say "And did it help?" and then he gave her absolution. That came as a sudden revelation to her, the futility of the endless arguments she had with her husband, of her endless desire to prove that she was right and that he was wrong. Suddenly she saw that there was no point to all this, it was quite simply unnecessary and she stopped from that moment.

So the uttered word can have great power and that applies also to what you or I utter when we make our confession. Yes we can

confess our sins secretly in our evening prayers and we should do so, but when we come before the holy icons in church, when we have listened to the prayers and speak in the presence of the priest, when we have to say these things aloud, often then it becomes powerful, immediate, personally significant in a way it was not before.

The uttered word has great force and we find ourselves in confession, by God's grace, saying things that we never said in our private prayers. Suddenly we are able to understand more deeply and to express it more openly. Therein lies much of the grace of confession. The desert fathers say that a thought which is concealed has great power over us, but if we can find a way to bring it into the open and to speak of it, it loses its power. That is also what the modern psychiatrists tell us, but the desert fathers said it first! So, the uttered word that we bring in confession can have a sacramental force and a healing grace which will surprise us.

But then there is a third thing, not just what the priest does when he offers advice, not just what we do when we try to speak the truth in Christ. There is also what Christ does. Confession is a mystery of the Church that confers sacramental grace, there is power within it, Divine power. When the priest lays his hand upon our head in Confession, it is Christ who lays his hand upon us, Christ who forgives and that is certainly the deepest and most profound reason why we should go to Confession. When such grace and such healing is offered to us, who among us dare refuse to accept such an opportunity?"



One of those moments...

The irate customer calling the newspaper office loudly demanded to know where her Sunday edition was.

“Ma'am,” said the employee, “today is Saturday. The Sunday paper is not delivered until Sunday.”

There was quite a pause on the other end of the phone, followed by a ray of recognition. “I’ll bet that’s why no one was in church today too.”

WHAT IS A FIRST-PORTION GIVER?

A First-Portion Giver is a believer who offers a first-portion of his time, talent, and financial resources out of grateful recognition of the fact that all he has, he holds in trust from God.



TIME

A First Portion Giver offers a first portion of his *time*.

“Let us spur one another on toward love and good deeds. Let us not give up meeting together, as some are in the habit of doing. But let us encourage one another...”

Hebrews 10:24-25



TALENT

A First Portion Giver offers a first portion of his *talent*.

“There are different kinds of gifts, but the same Spirit. There are different kinds of service, but the same Lord. There are different kinds of working, but the same God works all of them in all men.”

1 Corinthians 12:4-6



RESOURCES

A First Portion Giver offers a first portion of his *treasure*.

“Concerning the collection for the saints..., on the first day of the week, each one of you should set aside a sum of money in proportion to the income God has given you...”

1 Corinthians 16:2

IT'S STRANGE ISN'T IT

(Tongue in cheek with a little bit of truth in it)

Isn't it strange how a 20 dollar bill seems like such a large amount when

you donate it to church, but such a small amount when you go shopping?

Isn't it strange how 2 hours seem so long when you're at church, and how short they seem when you're watching a good movie?

Isn't it strange that you can't find words to say when you're praying, but you have no trouble thinking what to talk about with a friend?

Isn't it strange how difficult and boring it is to read one chapter of the Bible, but how easy it is to read 100 pages of a popular novel or ZANE GREY book?

Isn't it strange how everyone wants front-row-tickets to concerts or games, but they do whatever is possible to sit in the last row at Church?

Isn't it strange how we need to know about an event for Church 2-3 weeks before the day so we can include it in our agenda, but we can adjust it for other events at the last minute?

Isn't it strange how difficult it is to share a fact about God with others, but how easy it is to listen to, remember, and repeat gossip?

Isn't it strange how we believe everything that magazines and newspapers say, but we question the words in the Bible?

Isn't it strange how everyone wants a place in heaven, but they don't want to believe, do, or say anything to get there?

It's Really STRANGE

Sunday offering for June 15

Amount	Number
\$5.00	2
\$10.00	1
\$15.00	1
\$25.00	1
\$32.00	1 (loose)
\$40.00	4
\$50.00	3
\$80.00	1
\$100.00	1
\$200.00	1
\$300.00	1
<hr/>	
\$1122.00	

Visitors: \$55.00
Parishioner Total: \$1067.00
Average / parish household (42): \$26.02
Weekly Stewardship Goal: \$2125.00
Deficit: **(\$1058.00)**

Goal:

\$120000

2014

Stewardship Pledges

Pledges received: 18

Pledges:

\$39116

It is impossible to plan any sort of budget until all pledge forms are turned in. If you haven't returned your pledge, please do so.

Pastor:

Fr. James Bankston: (619) 905-5278

Pastoral Council:

Fr. Deacon Frank Avant: (760) 805-1667

Vladimir Bachynsky: (619) 865-1279

Mark Hartman: (619) 446-6357

Luke Miller: (858) 354-2008

Jeanine Soucie: (718) 674-4529

Social Committee Chairpersons:

Olga & Michael Miller:

(858) 483-3294

Finance Committee:

Bohdan Knianicky: (619) 303-9698

Fr. Deacon Frank Avant: (760) 805-1667



**Українська Греко-Католицька Церква
Святого Йоана Хрестителя
St. John the Baptizer
Ukrainian Greco-Catholic Church**

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Website: stjohnthebaptizer.org

Pastor: Fr. James Bankston
frjames@mac.com

Fr. James' cell phone: (619) 905-5278

Celebrating the Birth of John the Baptist

The Bible gives us no figure more isolated than John the Baptist, he does not quite fit either the Old or New Testament. ... One dare not forget that according to the infancy narrative the one who came after sanctified His precursor, that is, equipped him for his task, already in his mother's womb.

We glimpse here an event that applies throughout the entire Old Covenant. After all, according to Paul, we see Jesus accompanying His wandering people as a spiritual rock offering water in the desert (1 Cor 10:4), and, according to the Letter to the Hebrews, Moses preferred the humiliation of Christ to the riches of Egypt (Heb 11:26).

Yet the calling of John in his mother's womb takes place explicitly at a specific event, when two women met, and was expressed in equally

concrete terms: "You child, shall be called the prophet of the Most High and shall go before the Lord to prepare his way" (Lk 1:76).

Without question John was aware of his personal vocation as he grew up, and it is out of his awareness of having been called that he discovered his certain symbol, baptizing in the Jordan River. ... John releases his followers to follow Jesus; he does not begrudge them their larger following (Jn 3: 26-27); indeed, he rejoices that his task declines while the One Who is Coming grows. ... John's "joy which is now full" (Jn 3:29) shows how much he belongs - precisely as the one who lets go - to the wedding festivities of the New Covenant.

Father Han Urs van Balthasar